



NEBRASKA

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PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

TO: Matthew L. Blomstedt, Ph.D.
Commissioner of Education

FROM: Melody Hobson

PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM: Grant the Commissioner the authority to approve a contract with Emspace Group for community engagement services to provide information about Step Up to Quality.

RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION: Step Up to Quality is a quality improvement and rating system for early childhood programs serving children birth to kindergarten entrance age. Step Up includes research-based criteria to measure the quality of the early childhood education and care provided in family childcare and center-based programs. It also includes strategies and resources to assist programs and staff to improve the quality of education and care provided. This public engagement campaign will do the following:

1. Increase early childhood education and care provider knowledge of Step Up to Quality.
2. Provide information to families and community members of the importance of quality early childhood education and care environments.
3. Encourage the use of Step Up to Quality ratings when selecting early care settings.

This will be a two-year public engagement process.

The Step Up to Quality Steering Committee released an RFP for this public engagement contract in August of 2015. Two entities submitted proposals, a panel of reviewers determined that neither of the applications met the needs identified in the RFP. The Step Up to Quality Steering Committee re-released the RFP in October. Four entities submitted proposals. The review team found the proposal submitted by Emspace was an excellent fit for the Step Up to Quality program. The contract will be for two years with deliverables in each of the two years.

ESTIMATED COST: \$150,000

